

Upcoming NE-DBIC Funding Opportunities

By Kim Burns, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

As we come into the colder seasons, The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) is excitedly preparing for multiple funding opportunities that will serve dairy farms and processors in our region. Be sure to frequently check the NE-DBIC website for additional information and to stay-up-to date on these opportunities in the coming months. <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants>

Grants for Dairy Farms

- On-Farm Milk Storage & Handling Grant (*Now accepting applications*): This grant program provides dairy farmers with funds that support the purchase of equipment and supplies to



improve milk storage, handling, and energy efficiencies. Applicants will be able to select from a list of eligible equipment. This request for applications will be open until Oct. 6. Grants will range from \$15,000- \$50,000 with a 25% match commitment. Match

- waivers are available.
- Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant: The NE-DBIC will be offering grants to support food safety projects including specialized equipment purchase, supplies, food safety training, and certifications. Priority will be

given to projects that are utilizing food safety improvements to access new markets. This grant will be released in October. Grants of \$10,000 - \$40,000 with a 25% match commitment.

- Dairy Farm Innovation Grant: Projects funded through this grant will fund a wide range of projects across farm production and business operation models that support the implementation of community- and climate-forward production strategies. The scope of this grant will take a whole farm system approach and increase collaboration with other farms or dairy sector stakeholders. This grant will be released in October. Grants will range from \$10,000 to \$75,000 with a 25% match commitment required.

continued on page 3

AGRiVIEW

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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Inside This Issue

The View from 116 State Street

Page 2

2023 Farm Show Cancelled

Page 3

NE-DBIC Packaging Awards

Page 4

Barn Grants

Page 5

Hackett's Orchard

Page 5

Food System Plan: Ecosystem Services

Page 6

Responding to Farmer Stress

Page 7

West Farm

Page 8

2023 Construction

Page 9

Maple 100

Page 9

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News

Page 10

Classifieds

Page 11

Fairs & Field Days

Page 12

VT Meat Inspection

Page 14

VT Farm Viability

Page 15

Breakfast on the Farm

Page 16



THE VIEW FROM 116 STATE STREET

The summer of 2022 felt like the good old days. After a series of starts and stops the past couple of years because of the Covid-19, Vermont welcomed back Fairs and Field Days. It was great to see the cows back in the barns and floral hall filled with fresh veggies and flowers. Congratulations to all the countless volunteers who keep events part of our summer and fall.

The Big E in West Springfield Massachusetts will be our final fair of the year. The 17- day fair will welcome thousands of visitors to the Vermont building on the avenue of states in late September. When visitors walk into the Vermont building, they will be treated with a Green Mountain experience including fresh Vermont food and drink and products made in Vermont. Vermont day, historically



the biggest attendance day of the Big E will be on held on September 24. It's a special day including Vermont musicians who perform on the green outside the Vermont building as visitors enjoy Vermont treats.

Back in the Green Mountains, Vermont fairs and field days draw over 300,000 visitors each year. They are special days highlighting agriculture. Fairs and events offer opportunities for the agricultural community to highlight their

practices, products, skills, and livelihoods. You can witness the success of maintaining Vermont's working landscape by touring the grounds of a fair or field day.

Vermont supports fairs and field days each year with financial

support. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets has administered the Agricultural Fairs & Field Days Capital Projects Competitive Grants Program and the Stipend Fund for over a decade. These important dollars help finance critical improvements for the fairs and field days. The money could help finance a new cattle barn or maybe comfortable bleachers to view events. For more information about these funding opportunities, visit the Capital Projects Competitive Grants Program and the Stipend Fund Distribution Formula.

We encourage all to get involved in a fair or field day and of course visit one if you have the chance. You will be treated with great food and fun and a chance to visit with your neighbors. Your support means these important events remain viable for all of us to enjoy.

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This Month's Recipe

Maple Drizzled Apple Muffins

Makes 12 medium sized muffins

These are great at breakfast or for an afternoon snack.

Ingredients

For muffins:

1 1/3 cup flour
1 cup oats, quick or old-fashioned
1/2 cup sugar
1 tbs baking powder
1 1/2 tsp cinnamon
1/2 cup milk
1/3 cup vegetable oil
1/4 cup maple syrup
1 egg, slightly beaten
1 cup chopped apple

For glaze:

3 TBSP powdered sugar
1 TBSP maple syrup

Directions

- Heat oven to 400. Line 12 muffin cups or grease tins.
- Combine first five ingredients, mix well. In a small bowl, mix milk, oil, syrup, and egg. Add to the dry ingredients and mix just until moist. Gently stir in apples. Fill muffin cups until nearly full. Bake 20-25 minutes. Cool slightly. While cooling, mix powdered sugar and maple syrup and then drizzle across the muffins.



Vermont Farm Show Board Cancels the 2023 Event

By Kyla Bedard, Vermont Farm Show Board of Trustees

Due to circumstances related to and created by the coronavirus pandemic, the Board of Trustees of the Vermont Farm Show, Inc., is cancelling the 2023 show and assessing how to ensure the event successfully serves the state's agricultural interests in the years to come.

In a recent meeting, the Board unanimously agreed that the Vermont Farm Show should return in 2024, after a period of critique, evaluation, and review to ensure the event evolves with current needs and wants of the Vermont agriculture community in the 21st century. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets will coordinate a focus group with agricultural sector stakeholders to help meet this goal.

Since 1930, the purpose of the non-profit Vermont Farm Show and its Board of Trustees has been to promote Vermont agriculture through meetings of agricultural associations,

farming industry displays, exhibits, and demonstrations of innovative methods to grow food in ways that benefit the farmer, the environment, our communities, and society. Today, more than 90

years later, those objectives may be attained in vastly different ways than when the Show first brought people together.

"Agriculture in Vermont is changing rapidly, and the Vermont Farm Show needs to change, too, to better meet the needs of the agricultural community with the resources available," reflected Glenn Rogers, who served several years as a floor manager of the Vermont Farm Show and as past secretary and current treasurer on the Board of Trustees.

After holding the 2020 Show in January of that year, just prior to the beginning of the pandemic, the 2021 and 2022 shows were both cancelled



due to ongoing health and safety concerns with COVID-19. "We want to recognize both Board President Dave Martin and Glenn Rogers for their work to hold those shows during the

pandemic despite having to cancel. We are grateful for their long service and commitment to the Vermont Farm Show," said Vermont Farm Show Vice-President Kyla Bedard.

The Trustees of the Vermont Farm Show are looking for new Board members to help manage future Farm Shows and contribute to the mission to reimagine the Show. "The Board is committed to using this time to create the best experience for all Vermonters and our agriculture community. We also want to use this opportunity to grow our Board and invite anyone interested in envisioning the 2024 Farm Show to join us," said Bedard.

Per Board bylaws, Dave Martin has stepped down as President after a three-year term.

"The Board also will use this time as an opportunity to find someone who is passionate about Vermont agriculture in the 21st century to lead us through this time of transition," said Rogers. The Trustees are open to finding ways for the Vermont Farm Show to connect with new audiences, such as consumers, food-enthusiasts and all types of Vermont farmers.

Bedard offered, "We hope that with the support of a coalition of partners the Vermont Farm Show will return in 2024, re-envisioned and revitalized to better serve our Vermont agricultural community and provide connections and education for consumers."

Please contact Kyla Bedard if you're interested in joining the Vermont Farm Show Executive Board or Board of Trustees by email vermontfarmshow@gmail.com or by phone at 802-234-1060.

Funding Opportunities

continued from page 1

Grants for Dairy Processors

- **Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant:** The NE-DBIC will be offering grants to support food safety projects including specialized equipment purchase, supplies, food safety training, and certifications. Priority will be given to projects that are utilizing food safety improvements to access new markets. This grant will be released in October. Grants of \$10,000 - \$40,000 with a 25% match commitment.
- **Existing Dairy Processor Expansion Grant:** This grant will

be split into multiple funding tiers to accommodate processors of all scales. Projects will focus on acquiring specialized equipment needed to increase the processing capacity of regionally produced milk and other activities to support expansion to meet demand. This grant opportunity will be released in January.

- **Dairy Processor Innovation Grant:** Projects funded through this program will support long term business investments that increase dairy processor business consumer appeal and marketability of value-added dairy products. Project areas can address sourcing, product development, transportation/dis-

tribution, marketing/supply chain, operations, employee welfare, consumer experience, utilization of materials or systems that reduce carbon footprint, and beyond. This grant opportunity will be released in January.

Service Provider Funding

- **The Dairy Farm Cohort Technical Assistance Program** is expanding. Service Providers will be able to submit proposals to develop cohorts of dairy farmers to address relevant areas of technical assistance their region. Building on the success of eight current cohorts funded by NE-DBIC, service providers can submit proposals for projects up to \$150,000.

Topics can focus on grazing, forage enhancement, innovative farm practices, marketing, and/or other areas of support for farmers. This RFP has a deadline of Sept. 16.

- **Dairy Farm Production Education** funding will also be available for service providers and dairy producer associations to develop events, webinars, educational series, or conferences to increase farmer-focused production and business viability education. Proposals accepted for projects up to \$35,000. This RFP also has a deadline of Sept. 16.

Questions? Contact Kathryn Donovan: kathryn.donovan@vermont.gov or Laura.laura.ginsburg@vermont.gov.

DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

\$1.1 Million Awarded to Dairy Processors for Sustainable Packaging Innovation

By Kim Burns, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) is pleased to announce five recipients of the Dairy Product Packaging Innovation Grant, four of which are Vermont-based. This program will award \$1.1 million in grants to support projects that would reduce the use of virgin plastics and the environmental impacts of dairy product and supply chain packaging. The projects will increase marketability of dairy products by meeting consumer demand for more intentional sustainability practices. Projects will also include information sharing with other Northeast processors to allow other businesses to benefit from research and findings gained from their grant project. Funds were awarded to projects that spanned along the spectrum of research, development, and implementation, and education.

- **Agri-Mark, Inc./Cabot Cooperative Creamery** of Waitsfield, VT will receive \$323,875 to collaborate with TC Transcontinental to produce a study on a shelf-life and feasibility that compares sustainable cheese packaging options.

The study will encompass market research on consumer perspective on sustainable packaging, as well as an educational component that will enable the collaborating partners to share findings across the Northeast dairy processing industry.

- **Big Picture Farm** of Townsend, VT will receive \$147,800 to transform their entire line of packaging for their farmstead milk cheese and caramels to environmentally friendly formats that are recyclable, compostable, FSC-certified, and/or climate-forward. They will also design, create, and share a template of green-packaging solutions catered to small and mid-sized dairies and processors who want to innovate their packaging in sustainable ways.
- **Jasper Hill Cellars** of Greensboro, VT will receive \$127,442 to work with the University of Vermont (UVM) to assess sustainable packaging options for soft and hard cheeses and how packaging affects sensory qualities and shelf life. The research conducted by UVM will be made public for other artisanal cheesemakers. Jasper Hill will also work with Rival Brands, a Vermont-based branding and design firm, to con-

duct market research to understand consumer preferences for branding sustainable packaging. They will compile this market research to benefit other cheesemakers.

- **Stonyfield** of Londonberry, NH will receive \$300,000 to redesign their YoBaby pouches so that they are recyclable, which will result in a 0.7% reduction in Stonyfield's total packaging carbon footprint. They will then expand improvements onto all pouch lines and production sites. In addition, this

project will enable an adoption of the recyclable pouch format to other dairy processors.

- **Vermont Creamery** (Land O' Lakes) of Websterville, VT will receive \$200,000 to convert its current fresh goat cheese (chèvre) primary retail packaging into a recycle-ready or compostable structure by 2025. They will gather additional solutions that can be implemented amongst similar productions across the dairy industry. Another component of this project

includes consumer education on proper recycling and disposal methods. Vermont Creamery will partner with local partner, Casella Waste Management Systems, to achieve this goal.

View the official press release for the Dairy Product Packaging Innovation Grant here: [LINK](#). For more information about this grant and upcoming opportunities, contact Kathryn Donovan at kathryn.donovan@vermont.gov or 802-585-4571.



Historic Preservation Barn Grants

By VT Agency of Commerce
& Community Development

Established in 1992, the State-funded Barn Preservation Grant program helps individuals, municipalities, and non-profit organizations to rehabilitate the historic agricultural buildings that are a symbol of Vermont's rural landscape. This is the oldest state-funded agricultural-based grant program in the U.S.

Since its inception, the program has provided over \$3 million towards the preservation of over 360 historic barns and agricultural outbuildings around the state. Preservation of these



buildings not only protects Vermont's agricultural and architectural legacies, but it also generates jobs, supports independent businesses, increase civic participation, and bolsters a community's sense of place while enhanc-

ing the experience of visitors.

Applications for the 2023 grants are available and are due on Monday, December 5, 2022. Application materials are at: <https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/funding/barn-grants>

Barn Grant Interactive Map

The Division for Historic Preservation, in cooperation with the Legislature and the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, is able to award competitive 50/50 matching grants of up to \$15,000 for the repair and adaptive use of historic agricultural buildings. In order to qualify, the buildings must be at least 50 years old and listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

This is a reimbursement grant program, which means that if you are awarded a grant, you are responsible for paying for the full amount

of the project and the State will reimburse you once the project and required paperwork are completed. The Barn Grant Program is funded by the taxpayers of the State of Vermont, at the direction of the General Assembly, through the annual Capital Appropriations and State Bonding Act.

See our Frequently Asked Questions (PDF) for more information on the Barn Preservation Grants program.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Corkins by email, caitlin.corkins@vermont.gov or by phone, 802-828-3047.

Hackett's Orchard Looks Forward to Sweet Season after Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Grant

By Clare Salerno, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Apple season is here, which means all hands on deck for Vermont's orchards. Hackett's Orchard in South Hero has enjoyed a busy but smooth start to their season and looks forward to more success. Earlier this year, they were awarded a \$15,000 Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (WLEI) grant to weatherize and expand their retail salesroom.

With their Working Lands funds, Hackett's Orchard built insulated exterior walls and installed windows and

doors in the orchard's 500 square foot retail space. Business owner Devin Hackett says the expansion will enable more customers to shop at a time and provide more space for apples. In the past, Hackett's Orchard only had room for 16 bags of fancy apples on the shelves, with no room for utility grade apples. With the expansion, there will be space for 40 bags of fancy apples and 10 bushels of utility apples.

Now that the retail space is weatherized, it will be useable for Hackett's Orchard customers and employees longer into the colder weeks of apple season—into November this

year and with additional improvements through the end of December in the future. With customers able to shop longer into the season, visitors will be able to enjoy more later varieties of apples that Hackett's offers. The newest varieties

that will be showcased in addition to Hackett's existing apples include Premier Honey Crisp, Crimson Crisp, Fuji, Pink Lady, Shizuka, Ambrosia, and Nova Spy. Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (WLEI) funding opportunities are open now

for Producer Associations and Service Providers and will open for businesses in September 2022. Please visit workinglands.vermont.gov to learn more about how WLEI supports agriculture and forestry enterprises around Vermont.



Left: Hackett's Orchard retail area before Working Lands Enterprise Fund grant-funded weatherization renovation. At right: The retail area in summer 2022 after completed renovations.

VERMONT AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEM PLAN 2021 – 2030: Payment for Ecosystem Services

Editor's note: This brief is part of the Vermont Agriculture & Food System Plan 2021-2030 submitted to the legislature in January 2021. To read the full plan, please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/document/vermont-agriculture-and-food-system-strategic-plan-2021-2030>

Lead Authors: Nancy Everhart, Vermont Housing & Conservation Board | Alissa White, University of Vermont

This brief is based on the multi-stakeholder Payment for Ecosystem Services Working Group report.

What's At Stake?

Ecosystem services are the “ecosystem functions that are useful to humans.” Agricultural landscapes in Vermont can be managed to enhance ecosystem services such as nutrient cycling, climate regulation, biodiversity, and cultural identity.

Compensating farmers for providing these additional benefits to society beyond food production via a payment for ecosystem services (PES) program would financially recognize farmers' contributions to meeting pressing environmental goals such as the Lake Champlain Basin Total Maximum Daily Load plan, Greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and flood resilience, and also enhance the viability of farms committed to environmental stewardship. However, creating a viable



PES program to make transformative change will require policy and regulatory changes and new sources of capital, as well as technological, programmatic, and market developments that do not currently exist.

Current Conditions

A payment for ecosystem services program is premised on the idea that actions to improve or sustain ecosystem services should be economically quantified and rewarded. Farmers and conservationists in Vermont see PES as an innovative tool to enhance ecological stewardship and complement existing conservation incentive programs available to farmers. Current conservation programs typically solve environmental concerns by paying farmers for the implementation cost of discrete, prescriptive practices, as do most U.S. PES programs (e.g., the Conservation Reserve Program). Farmers in Vermont are interested in developing a PES program which instead pays for performance, as an opportunity to receive

payment for services provided, learn more about the specific ecological impacts of management changes on their farmland, and recognize and reward the initiative, ingenuity, and knowhow of farmers who have already invested in conservation practices. A PES program in Vermont would make payment contingent on the steady provision of services such as water purification, flood mitigation, aquifer recharge, erosion control, and biodiversity.

Due to the initiative of farmer-led Watershed Coalitions and UVM Extension, in 2019 the Vermont Legislature established a Soil Conservation

Practices and Payment for Ecosystem Services Working Group, which focused on soil health as the foundation to multiple ecosystem services. Designing a PES program which balances the goals and needs of all stakeholders is challenging. Multiple efforts are underway to determine what to measure, how to measure, how to structure payments, and how to balance efficiency with fairness, while allowing farmers the flexibility to innovate and adapt.

Bottlenecks & Gaps

- Scientific research has established strong and reliable links between soil health and many ecosystem services, but the

relationship between soil health and water-nutrient pathways requires more research.

- Farmers, researchers, and technical advisors need to build consensus on how to quantify performance of ecosystem service provisioning.
- It is unclear what payment scheme will best achieve balance between rewarding farmers already invested in conservation and making greater environmental gains.
- Reliable and long-term private and/or public funding sources need to be identified.
- The costs, logistics, and best entity to administer a PES program are all unclear, and stakeholders may not agree on the path forward.

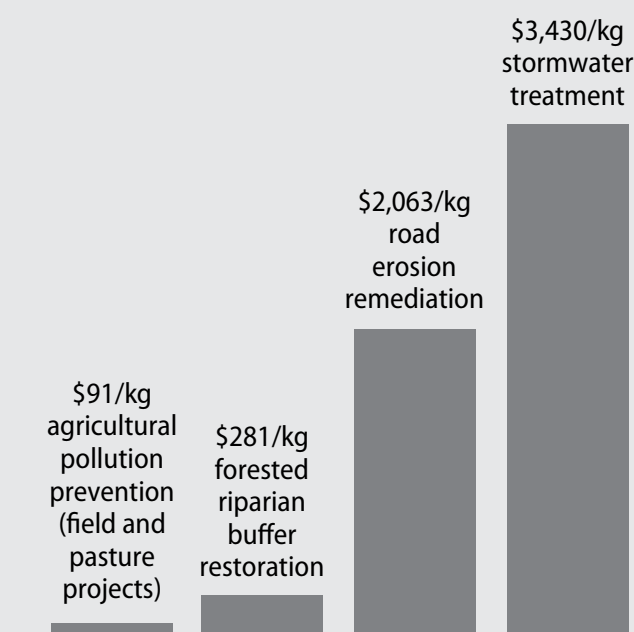
Opportunities

- There are existing and emerging technologies that can be modified or utilized to measure performance and outcomes.
- Improving ecosystem services can reduce future costs for individuals, municipalities, and the state, through reducing the severity of flood risk, reducing nutrient loading into surface waters, and slowing the pace of climatic change. These avoided costs can be estimated, and it is often more economical to invest in ecosystem services preemptively.
- Existing public funding could support a pilot PES effort in Vermont. Strong interest across the country

Adoption of agricultural best management practices across the state of Vermont could sequester **50,000 metric tons** of CO₂ per year.

Vermont's agricultural conservation programs are the most cost-effective effort to reduce phosphorus in state water bodies.

Median Cost to State per kg of Phosphorus Reduced by Various Water Quality Project Types





- in PES may lead to private markets and funding for ecosystem services more broadly.

 - The Vermont Environmental Stewardship Program (VESP) has enrolled several farmers and can be used to educate, engage, and prepare farmers for a future PES approach.
- ### Recommendations

(These recommendations are based on the multi-stakeholder PES Working Group report.)

 - Continue to support the Payment for Ecosystem
- Services Working Group, which is poised to be a central point of coordination and connection among the many needed research and design efforts. These efforts should focus on PES approaches that regrow or sustain Vermont's natural resource base so that it provides at least three ecosystem services: water quality, flood resilience, and climate stability. Estimated cost: \$90,000.

 - Undertake an evidence-based review of existing research on soil health, to
- advance understanding of soil health and the services it provides. Research by what metrics soil health should be measured and identify the ecosystem services that arise from those metrics. To be led by UVM. Estimated cost: \$30,000.

 - Fund independent research to review, evaluate, and compare existing tools for PES monitoring and modeling which could be used in Vermont. Then, identify, describe, and provide an initial evaluation of new and
- emerging technologies and programs for measuring and monitoring ecosystem services. Potentially performed by UVM. Estimated cost: \$30,000.

 - Based on the research reviews noted above, prepare a Request for Proposals for the development of a specific tool to quantify multiple ecosystem services from Vermont farms, which draws on real-time data and monitoring to pay farmers for producing clear, measurable outputs. Estimated cost: \$250,000.
- Expand the Vermont Environmental Stewardship Program (VESP) to provide farmer participation stipends for benchmarking and education. Estimated cost \$50,000.
 - Sustain funding for existing programs which enable farmers to invest in the management changes that lead to increased ecosystem services. This includes cost sharing, grants, technical assistance, education, easements, and the Current Use tax incentive.

Responding to Farmer Stress

By Elizabeth Sipple, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

In a recent training with Karen Crowley and Leanne Porter from Farm First, Agency staff explored techniques for supporting farmers when feeling stressed. The goal of the training was to support agricultural service providers in recognizing signs of stress and connect farmers with support long before things escalate to a crisis point. Farm First will be offering a similar training available to all agricultural service providers beginning in the fall of 2022. Don't hesitate to contact Farm First (farmfirst.org) for more information.

The first question that Farm First asked at the training, was: "If not you, who?" Farming can be an isolating profession, so anyone who visits farmers should have a baseline understanding

Warning Signs of Stress on the Farm

- Changes in emotions:** Reduced energy for the future, anxiety, loss of spirit, depression, loss of humor
- Changes in attitudes and cognitive skills:** Become frequently critical or agitated, lack concentration, trouble making decisions
- Changes in behavior:** Become quieter than usual, trouble sleeping, do not join friends or family activities, miss deadlines
- Changes on the farm operations:** Reduced care given to animals, machinery, fields, or themselves; increase in accidents; reduced energy for planning for the future

of what types of stress are typical and when it is time to suggest that a farmer get additional support. Farm First says that the first step is to be able to recognize when a farmer is agitated, anxious, or stressed. Table 1 below presents some warning signs that a service provider might notice.

But how do you even broach a topic that may feel awkward and sensitive? If you are concerned about someone's wellbeing, below are some ways to begin a

- conversation:
- Express concern: *"What you just said is concerning to me."*
 - Inquire about a behavior change: *"I have not seen you at church (the diner, coop meeting, feed store, etc.) recently, is everything alright?"*
 - Ask for more information: *"What did you mean when you said that?"*
 - Invite them to talk more: *"What is going on? Do you want to talk about it?"*
 - Ask directly: *"Are you*

really in trouble here?"

Once someone opens up to you, Farm First says it is critical to respond without judgment or criticism and with words of reassurance and support. Farm First also reminds us to avoid the impulse to jump to solutions or any statement that treats the situation as simple. These sentences often use the word "just," as in "Well, you just need to grow hemp," or "This is just a bad time right now, but it will all work out."

- Below are examples of sentiments that can be expressed:
- Recognize the difficulty of the situation: *"It sounds like you are dealing with some really tough stuff."*
 - Support their decision to reach out: *"I am glad you told me. I'm sure that was not easy to do."*
 - Identifying potential sources of support: *"Let's sit down and think about*

who might be able to help in figuring this out, Farm First is always available to talk."

- Offer hope: *"I am sure we can find the best way through all of this."*

Neighbors and agricultural service providers can support farmers by building relationships, listening, and sharing resources. In some cases, you may decide to take the extra step and help a farmer connect to Farm First. Farm First is a Vermont-based program that provides farmers and their families with FREE support. You can reach Farm First at:

Call: (802) 318-5538 during daytime work hours
Call: 877-493-6216 outside of daytime work hours
Email: Karen Crowley at karenc@farmfirst.org or Matt.Myers@farmfirst.org

Every conversation about stress combats stigma, so let's get talking!

FARM FEATURE:

West Farm

By Ollie Cultrara & Kim Burns - Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Farmers are creative about choosing methods and infrastructure that fit their unique operations. In this series, the Produce Program at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets features tools and practices that Vermont fruit and vegetable growers use to enhance food safety, increase efficiency, protect product quality, and improve employee satisfaction. This month we're featuring West Farm, a 10-acre organic vegetable and herb farm in Jeffersonville.

Hands-Free Handwash Sink

West Farm bought a hands-free sink in 2021 to replace their previous makeshift handwashing stations. The hands-free design allows the crew to turn on

the water by pushing on the pedal in the front of the sink with a knee or leg. It is hooked up to an on-demand water heater for warmer water in the colder seasons.

Why It Works

The farm chose a hands-free sink for two reasons. First, during the production season, the new sink allows employees to wash their hands without spreading dirt or other materials to the surfaces of the sink that other people must touch. This way, the sink stays cleaner and is easier to maintain. Secondly, the hands-free setup makes handwashing between tasks quick and effective. The sink is in a central location inside the wash and pack barn that makes it more accessible. Crew can easily wash their hands before heading out to harvest, before packing produce inside, after returning from a break, and in-between other tasks.

Note: the sink isn't plumbed to a drain, so the farm uses a bucket to collect used handwashing water. This keeps that water off the floor and away from foot and equipment traffic that could otherwise track through the water and spread potential contaminants.

Field-Packing Setup

West Farm recently implemented a new field packing practice where they field pack into waxed cardboard boxes that are placed inside of large plastic totes. The key difference between the setup and the previous one is the usage of the large plastic totes, colloquially known as fish totes. The fish totes are made of durable plastic and when the waxed cardboard boxes are placed inside, they can be dragged between rows while the harvester field-packs. The totes are easy to clean with a daily rinse and an occasional thorough scrub.

Why It Works

The fish totes provide a barrier between the ground and the bottom of the wax boxes during harvest. Even in areas that aren't "dirty," the totes prevent any unnoticed contamination, such as deer droppings, from contacting the cases or produce. This is especially important for field packing greens that are iced and palletized in the field. Any debris stuck to the bottom of a box could otherwise potentially cross-contaminate

multiple cases as the ice melts. Another benefit is that clean boxes improve the quality of presentation to customers. While it is a little less efficient for packing out larger cases (e.g., kale), the farm finds the trade-off worthwhile.

For more information about on-farm food safety and resources for fruit and vegetable growers, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/produceprogram

Organic Certification Cost Share Program

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM) offers funding assistance through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to organic producers and handlers of agricultural products who have received organic certification through a USDA-accredited certifying agent.

Certified organic producers and handlers who have paid certification fees to become newly certified or re-certified for specific scopes under the National Organic Program (NOP) are eligible for cost-share reimbursement.

Certified organic operations may receive reimbursement of up to 50% of their direct certification costs paid between October 1 and September 30 annually, not to exceed \$500 per certification scope. There are up to four eligible certification scopes (crops, livestock, wild crops, and handling), which must be individually inspected for organic certification to be eligible for reimbursement.

Allowable Costs include application fees, inspection fees, USDA organic certification costs, user fees/sale assessments, and postage.

To learn more and apply, please visit: agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/organiccostshare

The application deadline is November 1, 2022. Reimbursement is available on a first come, first served basis. Contact Terry Smith at terry.smith@vermont.gov or (802) 828-5667.



West Farm places wax boxes inside a plastic fish tote to keep the boxes clean when packing crops in the field.

Constructing in 2023? Plan Now.

By Sonia Howlett, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Thinking about a construction project on your farm next summer? Our experienced staff at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets have seen many farmer construction projects over the years and recommend that you start planning a year prior to construction. In addition to COVID-related delays and hurdles relating to construction, including scarcity of materials and overbooked contractors, it takes time to navigate town, state, and federal regulations on construction activities.

The Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) from the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets may apply to some construction projects. In addition, the Agency of Natural Resources, the Agency of Transportation, the Vermont Land Trust, and Act 250 may play a role in the planning and permitting of certain projects. Anytime water use is changing, wastewater may need to be considered. Proximity to wells, groundwater, rivers, streams, wetlands, floodplains, and floodways all need to be taken into consideration as well. Easements and right of ways for utilities, roadways, and railways have requirements that need to be met. Remember that farms are not exempt from construction storm water permits, and farmers may need to plan how to manage



heavy use area storm water runoff.

All these regulations were built to carefully balance our environment, economy and communities – but can be overwhelming. Thankfully, there are resources to help navigate the process.

Agency of Agriculture engineers can help you with

engineering assistance on water-quality-related projects and provide guidance on which state permits the project may trigger. Find an engineer at agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/water-quality-program-staff. The Department of Environmental Conservation also have Permit Specialists

listed on their website who can assist farmers navigate environmental regulations. To find a Permit Specialist, visit <http://dec.vermont.gov/environmental-assistance/permits/specialists>

Please note that in addition to state regulations, your town may have various requirements

for construction. When constructing a farm structure, you may be exempt from some of these regulations because construction of farm structures is regulated by the Agency of Agriculture. However, you still always must notify of the town zoning administrator or town clerk of the proposed project. You must also ensure that the farm structure meets state and local setbacks from landscape features such as property lines, rights-of-way, and water sources, unless you have a requested and received a written variance from the Agency of Agriculture. To learn more about land use regulations and limitations to farm structures, visit: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/land-use-renewable-energy-0/municipal-by-law-land-use-limitations> or contact Mary Montour at 802-461-6087.

The 2022 Maple 100

By Kristen Wirkkala, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is proud to present the 2022 Vermont Maple 100 — a fall celebration of one of our state's most treasured treats. From September 15th through October 15th, businesses and organizations across the state will be offering unique maple-inspired products and experiences. The Maple 100 encourages Vermonters and visitors alike to discover new ways to enjoy maple; savor unique maple specialty products, go on a sugarhouse tour, indulge in a new maple creemee spot, enjoy a maple-inspired cocktail or brew, go on a fall foliage hike, or join your friends for an educational sugarbush tour! You may even find a maple-infused dog treat for your furry friend! Bring your friends and family along to explore all the ways to enjoy Vermont's sweetest treat! Visit vtmaple100.com to explore the offerings and plan your next adventure!



VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY NEWS



Compiled by Vern Grubinger,
University of Vermont
Extension
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www.vvbga.org

Reports From The Field

(E. Wallingford) We had some hail damage last week. The hail was larger than 3/4 inch. Some of the hail remained on top of our bird netting but no damage was done to netting. It did bruise ripe blueberries and marked the green fruit. Squash and cukes are marked as well. No signs of SWD. Fruit is large despite dry weather and we're having a great turn out for PYO. Some blueberries are the size of a quarter!

(Guildhall) Our fields are river bottom sand, so we could always use more rain, but thankfully we've been catching thunderstorms and aren't anywhere near as dry as most of New England. Potatoes look great thus far. One 17-acre field is weedier than I like, having missed some early tine weedings, and it's historically our weediest field. The other 31 acres though are clean. All the fields have filled their rows.

CPB was late this year. We didn't spray until 7/13 (for second generation of CPB) and then again 7/25. Usually our first spray, which

is for 2nd gen, is on 7/1. Hopefully won't need to spray again. We spray the 2 generation, not the first, because I want all the fields to have what they'll get for CPB, and no sense wasting spray on low populations. The second spray about 10 days after the first spray is to take care of anything that emerges later because it was still pupating underground during the first spray.

We could start picking new baby reds but we're holding off as long as we can afford too. Pumpkins are weedy garbage this year, but there will be pumpkins, and who's got time to handweed?

(Marlboro) Just now seeing SWD, later than past years which is a welcome break. We've been seeing some damage in the berries and had a positive ID thanks to the quick work of Margaret Skinner at UVM. Getting the first spray of Entrust on in hopes of slowing them down.

We've covered three rows of late-ripening blueberries with drosophila proof netting, so hoping to be able to pick them later when the SWD gets too bad in the uncovered rows. The best raspberry year we have had for many years because it's been so dry, they have done well. Good blueberry crop also, and we are getting plenty of pickers for PYO.

(Huntington) In April-July, we've had 4.6", 3.6", 5.5", and 5.6" of rain, with only one driveway-rearranging thunderstorm. My only complaint about weather for this year is that it was too comfortable sleeping weather during the cool June and early July, which led to

some somewhat slow growth on heat-loving crops like sweet potatoes. That, and all the cool dewy nights and October-like days created perfect conditions for onion downy mildew. It's been 8 years since we have seen any of that nasty visitor, and the initial infection site in the field was exactly where my sprayer boom bumped way up in the air when doing a late June preventive spray of Serenade and Regalia, giving poor coverage in that stretch. On that note, I would love to see more efficacy trials being done in the northeast for OMRI-approved fungicides, insecticides, and bio-stimulants. I don't have the bandwidth to try all the new products and permutations out there, and while some of them are snake oil, many have promise.

(Westminster) Remember when we were complaining about how dry it was? That's over now; lots of rain. Our first sweet corn had problems with corn borer, but it looks like our next few plantings will be cleaner. We're harvesting Providence, a big favorite with our customers.

After a slow start, sales of greens – lettuce, kale, collards and cabbage – are picking up. We harrowed under quite a bit of lettuce this year, some of which grew too fast in the heat and some because of oversupply in the market.

We've seen several waves of flea beetle come through on our kale and have treated it with PyGanic; also cabbage worm on cabbage.

We've begun harvesting beets and carrots, and that all looks good. Not much else; just slogging through the hot days.

Leaf Analysis Is Important to Guide Berry Fertilization

Leaf, or tissue analysis tells you what nutrients your berry crop is actually taking up from the soil. Samples cost \$28 analyzed through Dairy One in NY. <https://dairystone.com/services/forage-laboratory-services/plant-tissue-analysis/>. **Strawberries:** Sample the first fully expanded leaves after renovation or within the first six weeks after harvest. **Raspberries:** Sample non-fruiting canes between August 1 and 20. **Blueberries:** Sample between July 1 and August 30. Collect at least 30 healthy undamaged leaves that are well exposed to light and represent the average condition of the planting. Remove petioles and put leaves in a dry paper bag or perforated plastic bag and immediately label with name of the area the sample represents.

Summer Pollinator Report

Laura Johnson, UVM
Extension pollinator support specialist

Summer and winter squash bloom observations were conducted between dawn and late morning. By noon, squash flowers are closed, closing, or wilting. Blossom visits were dominated by three bees during the month of June; honeybees (*Apis mellifera*), squash bees (*Peponapis pruinosa*), and bumble bees (*Bombus spp.*). Smaller bumble bee workers have been regularly observed as queen bees stay in their nests to rear their colonies. Male squash bees remain inside blossoms overnight,

while females rest in their nests about 2" below ground until the next day, nearby or within the squash plantings. Less commonly observed native bees, like the green sweat bee (*Augochlorini spp.*), were also occasionally found foraging in blooms. Be on the lookout for other natives emerging mid-summer and found in squash blossoms, like the two-spotted long-horned bee (*Melissodes bimaculatus*). I was very excited to find one this week!

Non-bee insects found in squash blooms included striped and spotted cucumber beetles. A 1964 University of California article mentions that cucumber beetles are capable of transferring pollen from male to female flowers and may contribute to pollination, but their destructive qualities to a crop likely outweigh the beneficial act of pollination.

Resources from the UVM Agricultural Engineering Team

Andy Chamberlin and Chris Callahan

Our website <https://go.uvm.edu/ageng> is full of post-harvest (wash/pack), protected culture (greenhouse and high tunnel) and other sustainable agriculture resources. Join 910 subscribers and watch some of our 220 videos on our YouTube channel for technical tips and farm visit videos at <https://go.uvm.edu/agengyt>. Listen to 75 episodes of the Ag Engineering Podcast for details on tools, tips and techniques to improve farm sustainability at <https://agengpodcast.com>.

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To place a classified ad in *Agriview* sign up to be a paid subscriber — visit our website: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vaafm-news/agriview/advertising-agriview>

Email: Ag.agriview@vermont.gov, phone: 802-828-1619. Deadline for submissions is the 1st of each month for next month's issue. Example: January 1st deadline for February issue.

Cattle

Angus Bulls for sale.

Greensboro, VT (802) 533-9804 (8)

Breeding Age Bulls, Registered

Holstein. 10 over a year of age; popular sires; Dam to over 30,000 milk, 5.1 % 1600 Fat, 3.4 % protein. Robeth Holsteins, Rochester VT. Delivery available. Call David at 802-342-1816 or Bob at 802-767-3926. (8)

18-month old open pure-bred Guernsey heifer. Stellar pedigree. Can be registered. Would make an excellent family cow or a great addition to an existing herd. \$2000 or best offer. Call George at gopher broke Farm or email. 917-692-7749 (8)

Beef cow (approx. 1300lb, 3 y/o, open) + calf. Angus x Hereford. Calm, halter broken, fence trained. \$2000 obo. 802-258-7088 (12)

Lowline Angus heifers for sale. 3 open heifers ready to breed @ \$800 each. One 3 year old with a calf at her side born 7/6/22 priced at \$1000. Grass fed, not certified Organic. Trucking available at an extra cost. Call Vince Foy, N. Danville, Vt., 802-748-8461. (12)

Equipment

New Holland 2 row corn head model 770N2 fits 718 chopper and others. Best offer 802-293-5439 (8)

76 Deloval vacuum pump, like new. 19 ton grain bin, like new. Mower 7ft, 12 ½ ft steel roller, 2 furrow plows 802-624-0143 (8)

13 ft roller. John Deere 39 3pt hitch mower. 10 ton grain bin. 802-624-0143 (9)

Dr. Stewart Clipmaster cattle clippers with extra blades \$100.00. Complete set of shoes fit 3200 cattle used 1 month \$50. (9)

New Idea 5209 disc mower, Fahr Tedder (4 rotor) KH 500, JD 894 rake and M-F 120 baler. Baler is fresh out of dealer, small bales, good knotters. All together for \$13,000.00. 802-316-7815 (10)

New Idea horse drawn tedder/side delivery rake with metal wheels, need pole \$50. John Deere I4T balers with PTO \$150. Pioneer Tooth Harrow smoothing – double 10" adjustable \$50. Horse drawn disc harrow, single needs pole \$50. Horse drawn single smoothing harrow needs pole \$50. Horse drawn team dump rake metal wheels needs pole \$50. Metal stone boat \$30. Misc steel and wood eveners & yokes for horses \$50 LS. Metal stock gates – 10 and 12ft. 6 each \$100. John Deere No. 1 horse drawn mower with metal wheels 5' cutter bar needs rebuilding \$50. 250 gallon galvanized metal cattle water tub \$50. 802-291-4525 (7)

Delaval 1250 gal Bulk Tank. Patz Gutter Cleaner- Counter Clockwise, approximately 350 ft of chain. 4 ft Gutter grates. New Holland FP230 chopper with both heads. Call (802) 933-6840 for more information (7)

John Deere 6810 forage harvester for sale with 10 foot a head and six row rotary Kemper corn head. \$55,000. A Bell and Gosset heat exchanger HTST pasteurizer with

pumps, Controls and hot water set. Will pasteurize approximately 3000 gallons per hour. \$26,000. Franz 20 valve filler with CIP system capper, conveyor and debagging table \$26,000. Thomas Dairy, call 802-989-0793 (7)

7630 John Deere Tractor New in 2007 – 3500 hrs. IVT Transmission – Economy PTO Active Seat – Suspended Front End. AX10BIB Tires – Rear View Camera. 835 John Deere MoCo Mower – Center Pivot New in 2008 – 1000 RPM PTO 11' 6" Cutting Swath. Anderson Bale Wrapper New in 2014 Model RB680 – Honda Engine Hand Held Remote Control. Meyers VB440 Vertical Beater Manure Spreader New in 2018 Call 802-563-2332 or email hazelgreavestaxservice@gmail.com

Equine

Horse for sale. Halflinger, 15 hands, 14 years old, strong and gentle, trained to harness by Amish. \$4,500. Accompanying equipment also for sale, price negotiable: harness, bobsled, heavy 2-wheeled cart, sulky, cultivator, small spiked harrow, potato plow. Shrewsbury, VT. Art Krueger at 802-492-3653 or knsh@vermontel.net. (5)

General

14 acre fertilized field for contract use. Located at 23 School St. in N. Springfield, Vt. Land is high and dry. Call Karl 802 886-1473 (10)

Hay, Feed & Forage

Excellent quality first cut wrapped round bales; baleage. Shelburne VT Call Andy 802-598-6060. Analysis available upon request. (3)

Organic haylage 12% protein \$45 per ton, 15% protein \$55 per ton. 802-537-2435 (3)

4x4 round balage mixed grains cut late June. \$30 802-325-3707 (3)



1st cut 4x5 round bales. Don Pettis, 802-265-4566. (3)

Certified Organic First and Second cut wrapped round bales for sale. Clover, Timothy and mixed grasses. Test samples and delivery available. Call Matt at 802-558-3879. (3)

Vetch & rye seeds for sale, mixed in 50 lb. bags, \$1/lb. certified by Vermont Organic Farmers. Thornhill Farm, 198 Taylor Road, Greensboro Bend, VT 05842, todd@thornhillfarmvermont.com, 802.441.3176 (3)

2021 first cut \$ 4.00 at barn in Ryegate. Steve 802-584-4450 (3)

Hay for sale: 1st cut organic round bales. Randolph Center. Call John at 522-8798 (3)

Certified organic first cut wrapped round bales for sale – cut by mid-June, good sized and well made. Asking \$50/each with 200 bales available. Beidler Family Farm, Randolph Center Contact: 802-728-5601 or brentbeidler@gmail.com. (3)

Excellent quality first, second, and third cut wrapped round bales for sale. First cut by June 1, dry. \$50.00/bale Please call 802-454-7198 (3)

1st, 2nd and 3rd cut haylage and corn silage for sale at the bunk. Call 802-533-2984. (3)

Dry 2nd Cut Hay for Sale 5' round bales, avg. 750 lbs, \$100/bale- Craftsbury, VT 802-624-0539 (3)

Certified organic 4x4 round bales for sale. First cut 45.00, second and third 55.00. 802-793-7526 (3)

Excellent quality wrapped round bales for sale. \$50/bale. No emails. Please call 802-454-7198 (3)

1st cut 4 x 4 wrapped round bales \$45/bale call Tom at 802-457-5834 (3)

1st, 2nd & 3rd cut round bales. 2nd cut square bales - 6.00 A bale. Volume discount for square and round bales. Please call Chris 802-272-0548. (3)

Certified Organic wrapped round bales. Mid-summer first cut @ \$45/bale and 2nd and 3rd cut @ \$55/bale loaded at the farm in N. Danville. All hay is tedded and raked and feeds out like dry hay. Definitely not frozen. Perfect for small as well as large ruminates. Email Vince at badgerbrookmeats@gmail.com or call 802-748-8461. (3)

Certified organic wrapped round bales – 1st & 2nd cutting 802-592-3356 (3)

400 Wrapped Bales Available. 1st May cut. 2nd June cut. 3rd July cut. Call (802)446-2791/dlc724@gmail.com (3)

4 X 4 wrapped baleage, good quality. Certified organic. Fair prices. Call Phil at 802-254-6982 (5)

400 Wrapped Bales Available. 1st May cut. 2nd June cut. 3rd July cut. \$80 each. Call (802)446-2791 / dlc724@gmail.com (5)

1st, 2nd and 3rd cut haylage and corn silage for sale at the bunk. Call 802-533-2984. (5)

ADDISON COUNTY

June 1 cut 4 x 5 round bales for sale \$45 a bale. Approximately 1000 ton of

CLASSIFIEDS

corn silage \$58 per ton. call 802-989-0793 (7)

4 x 5 2nd cup round bales for sale \$50 A bale. 4 x 5 straw bales for sale \$60 a bale call 802-989-0793. (7)

CALEDONIA COUNTY

2022 Square Bales \$4.50 1st, \$5.50 2nd At the barn in Ryegate Steve or Jamie 802-584-4450 (7)

CHITTENDEN COUNTY

First Cut wrapped round bales,

processed. Great heifer or beef hay. Analysis available upon request. Huntington, VT. Call or text Tim: 802-363-9770 \$45 loaded (8)

FRANKLIN COUNTY

200 tons certified Organic corn silage stored in an ag bag. Will load for you. 180 wrapped 4X4 certified organic round bales 18% protein, price negotiable. Highgate Center, VT 802-868-7535 If no answer,

please leave a message. (9)

Certified organic wrapped round bales. The hay is dry, or close to dry. We have forage sample results if interested. Trucking can be arranged. \$45-55/bale depending on which hay is taken. 802-752-5669

LAMOILLE COUNTY

Organic baled straw. \$5.50/bale. Organic First Cut Hay. \$5.00/bale. Certified Organic. Valley Dream Farm, Cambridge. 802-644-6598. valleydreamfarm@gmail.com. (3)

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Excellent Quality. First, second, and third cut wrapped round bales. Dry. Perfect for horses, dairy, or goats. \$50/bale. No emails. Please call 802-454-7198. (5)

100+ 4x4 wrapped round bales \$50 each 802-793-3511 (12)

WINDSOR COUNTY

4 x 4 wrapped bales, 1st green \$45., dry \$55. 2nd green \$50., dry \$60. Royalton, 802-356-1402 royalvillagefarm@gmail.com (4)

Quality first cut wrapped round bales for sale \$40 each. 802-674-2417 (5)

Wanted

Looking for a 24' hay elevator in good condition with a 3/4 hp motor. Contact Israel (Cabot) at 802-563-6061 or email: ihelfand1@gmail.com

Agency Contact Numbers

To help you find the right number for your question, please consult the list below. You are always welcome to call our main line 802-828-2430. We will do our best to route you to person most able to answer your question quickly and accurately.

Program Phone Numbers

Act 250	802-461-6798
Animal Health	802-828-2421
Business Development	802-828-1619
Dairy	802-828-2433
Enforcement: Water Quality or Pesticide ..	802-828-2431
Feed, Seed, Fertilizer & Lime	802-828-5050
Licensing & Registration	802-828-2436
Meat Inspection	802-828-2426
Produce Program	802-522-7811
VT Agriculture & Environmental Lab ...	802-585-6073
Water Quality BMP	802-828-3474
Water Quality Grants	802-622-4098
Water Quality Reports	802-272-0323
Weights & Measures	802-828-2433
Working Lands	802-917-2637

For Immediate Release

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets have received an application for a Milk Handlers license from the following entity: McLane/Eastern Inc, of Contoocook, New Hampshire to buy/sell and transport milk, cream, cultured products, butter, cheese, powdered and/or evaporated milk products, and pasteurized ice cream mix products within the State of Vermont. If anyone has germane information as to why or why not this company should or should not be licensed those comments are to be sent to:

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets
Dairy Section Office
116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

All written comments must be received by October 15, 2022.

At that time the Agency will make a determination as to whether a hearing will be held. If we determine that a hearing is necessary and you wish to attend please write to the above address attention Dairy Section.

2022 Vermont's Fairs and Field Days

Vermont's classic country fairs are a favorite summer past-time for Vermonters and visitors alike. Drawing over 700,000 visitors and exhibitors every year, Vermont's fairs and field days represent an important opportunity to promote agricultural literacy and provide insight into our unique cultural heritage. They're also a great source of entertainment and fun for the whole family! Please be sure to visit fair websites for the most up to date information.

- Champlain Valley Fair
August 26 - September 4, 2022
- Guilford Fair
September 5-6, 2022
- Orleans County Fair
September 7-11, 2022
- The Tunbridge Fair
September 15-18, 2022

For Agricultural Events and Resources Visit:

- The VT Agency of Agriculture Events Calendar: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/calendar>
- UVM Extension Events Calendars: https://www.uvm.edu/extension/extension_event_calendars
- Vermont Farm to Plate Events Calendar: <https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/events>
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont Events Calendar: <http://nofavt.org/events>
- DigIn Vermont Events Calendar: <https://www.diginvt.com/events/>
- Agricultural Water Quality Regulations: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations>
- Agency of Ag's Tile Drain Report now available here: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/tile-drainage>
- VAAFM annual report available here: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/about_us/budgets_reports
- Farm First: Confidential help with personal or work-related issues. More info call: 1-877-493-6216 any-time day or night, or visit: www.farmfirst.org
- Vermont AgrAbility: Free service promoting success in agriculture for people with disabilities and their families. More info call 1-800-639-1522, email: info@vcil.org or visit: www.vcil.org.

For more agricultural events visit our Funding Opportunities & Resources for Businesses webpage at: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer_partner_resources/funding_opportunities

"At Least Equal To"

The Vermont Meat Inspection Program

By Joni Bales, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Since 1967, the Vermont State Meat Inspection program has been providing daily inspection services in each Vermont meat processing and slaughter establishment. These inspection services occur on every day these establishments produce meat products bearing the State of Vermont mark of inspection. There are currently seven commercial state slaughter establishments, and five commercial state meat processors. Additionally, Food Safety Specialists provide periodic sanitation inspection at 31 custom slaughter and processors (meat produced as custom are for the personal consumption of the owner and marked "Not for Sale" to the public). Periodic sanitation reviews are also done at the more than 1800 retail meat establishments. Retail vendors include all locations that sell any form of meat or poultry, including the obvious grocery stores, farm stands, even gas stations and hardware stores.

Vermont's unique agricultural economy makes the state meat inspection program essential. We are a state of small and local growers and producers and need a structure to accommodate this. Increasingly, the farming and processing of our nation's meat and poultry is being concentrated in just a few companies. This is not the case in Vermont.



Vermont State Meat Inspection Program Section Chief Julie Boisvert discusses production records with Phil Brown, Owner of Brown's Meat Processing in Glover, Vermont while his employees package ground beef.

The ability of small slaughterhouses and processors to be inspected locally enables farmers that have just a few head of cattle or pigs, or a few hundred chickens, to get those products into the marketplace and enhance the income of their farm. For meat and poultry to be sold in this state, it must be processed and slaughtered under inspection. (There is an exemption for small poultry producers). It is a uniquely Vermont experience for a customer to be able to drive through the countryside and see functioning farms, meet the farmers, see the animals, or produce right there in the field or barn, and then be able to buy the meat and poultry at the farm stand or a nearby grocery, after it has been processed, packaged, and labelled under inspection. To put it in perspective, when it is said that Vermont producers are small by comparison, Vermont slaughterhouses are processing a few dozen livestock or a few hundred poultry per

day, usually 1 to a few days a week. This is in comparison to few thousand livestock or a few hundred thousand poultry in the very large establishments of the south and mid-west!

The state inspection program can best be described as "interlaced" with the Federal Meat Inspection Program which is operated by the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS), part of USDA. There is a formal cooperative agreement between the state inspection program and the federal inspection program. All Food Safety Specialists that work in the state program go through the rigorous six-month USDA training process alongside their federal counterparts. They attend a mandatory one-month training seminar on Inspection Methods conducted by the USDA, as well as classes specifically detailing inspection procedures at livestock and poultry slaughter establishments. The methods and criteria for inspecting state and

federal establishments are almost "exactly" the same. This is no coincidence, as it is required under regulations dictated by the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act that give inspectors their authority. All state meat inspection programs must ensure that state meat and poultry processors follow regulations that are "At Least Equal To" the rules outlined for Federal establishments.

The USDA FSIS conducts two types of audits on state programs to verify their "At Least Equal To" status.

1. Annually, the USDA audits all records, inspections, reports, test results, etc.

2. And every three years, the USDA conducts an actual on-site review of all the state establishments and state offices. They must accept Vermont's system to retain the "equal to" status. The USDA provides a 50/50 match for funding of the Vermont Meat Inspection program to provide these services. If Vermont did not have its own meat inspection program, all meat and poultry slaughterers and processors would have to be inspected by the USDA FSIS.

In addition to its state-inspected establishments, Vermont also has 12 USDA inspected slaughter establishments, and 15 meat/poultry processors. Some of these establishments have a full-time inspector employed by the USDA. This is especially true at slaughterhouses that operate year-round.

State and Federal slaugh-

terhouses must have an inspector present the entire day; from the moment the first animal is presented for inspection until the last carcass is stowed in the cooler. Processors must have an inspector present for a portion of each day that they are processing. These establishments do everything from smoking bacon and hams, making beef jerky, making frozen pizzas, to cutting up whole sides of meat into retail cuts and packaging them. Another part of the cooperative relationship between the state's meat inspection program and the federal program is that the state inspectors are frequently utilized to inspect at federal establishments where there is no full-time federal inspector, or to cover when that inspector is on leave. This further illustrates the need to have an "At Least Equal To" status; otherwise, Vermont Inspectors would not be able to fulfill this vital role.

The role of the Vermont Food Safety Specialist is multi-faceted, but they are a resource to ensure farmers and meat processors can legally get their product into commerce, and ensure the consumer is protected. The mission of the program is: "To protect the health and welfare of consumers and the public by assuring meat and poultry products produced are wholesome, unadulterated, and properly marked, labeled, and packaged."

Conservation Practices, Viability and Staying Power of Vermont Farms

By Mark Canella, UVM Extension

In winter 2021 a survey of Medium Farm Operations (MFOs) and Large Farm Operations (LFOs) was conducted in Vermont. The goal of this survey is to gather information on the economic situation across Vermont's medium-to-larger farms, explore their adaptation to Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) and to understand the next steps for farms moving forward. The anonymous survey was distributed to all registered MFO and LFO farm business owners through postal mail and final returns resulted in a 44% response rate, equating to 62 complete survey responses. A similar survey had been conducted for Certified Small Farm Operations (CSFOs) in 2019.

The recent survey shows that conservation practice adoption and compliance is widespread among MFOs and LFOs in Vermont. These farms have made

changes and investments since the new regulations and Required Agricultural Practices were enacted five years ago. The largest compliance factor this group of farms continues to address is silage leachate and feed storage.

Very few MFO and LFO owners were unsure if their farm is in compliance for particular categories, less than 2%. This is much fewer than CSFO owners in 2019, where an average of 10% of owners were "unsure" about compliance across five major farm features.

This is likely due to the larger farms having many more years of experience with Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets oversight and more routine inspections: every 1 year for LFOs and every 3 years for MFOs, as compared to every 7 years for CSFOs.

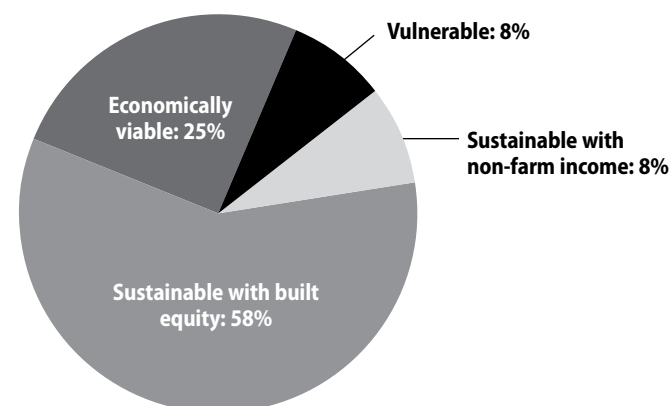
The recent survey also showed a higher degree of familiarity with conservation among MFO and LFO owners in 2021 compared to CSFO owners in 2019. Only three percent (3%) of MFO and LFO respondents

say they are "not familiar" with conservation programs, compared to twenty-eight percent (28%) of CSFOs.

Shared challenges impact the business viability of all farms in Vermont. In the two identical surveys the MFO and LFO group and the CSFO group both indicated the same top three challenges: short-term profitability; lack of capital for investment; and labor-employee concerns. Within the MFO and LFO group, however, a higher percentage of farms indicated these challenges (short term profitability 95% MFO-LFO vs 83% CSFO, lack of capital 87% MFO-LFO vs. 80% CSFO, labor-employee concerns 85% MFO-LFO vs. 67% CSFO). Thus, these larger farms are shown to experience each of these challenges at a higher rate compared to smaller farms in Vermont.

That said, medium and large farms in 2021 indicated stronger short and mid-term staying power compared to certified small farms, and more confidence in their business outlook over the next five years. Over 40% of

Percentage of Respondents in Each Self-Assessed Category of Business Viability



CSFOs in 2019 were likely to consider an exit or business wind-down over the next five years, compared to 10% of responding MFOs and LFOs in 2021. The dramatic 20 % drop in the number of registered dairy farms in Vermont from 677 in 2019 to 544 was primarily driven by the departure of small farms, which confirms the trend that had been anticipated in the 2019 CSFO survey.

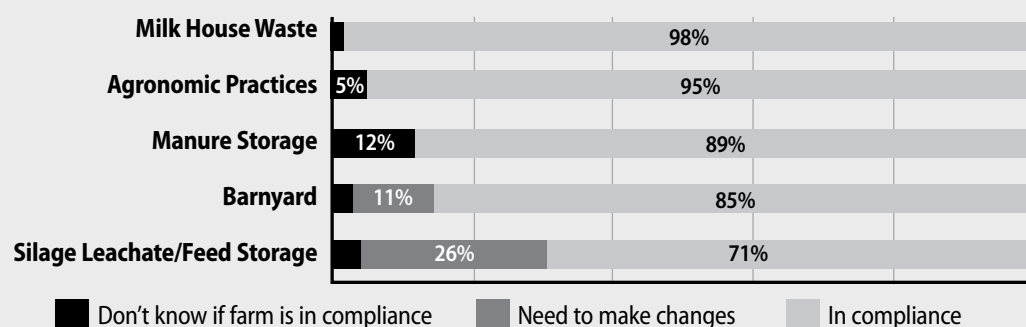
MFOs and LFOs also indicated they are more likely than CSFOs to consider growth: expanding their enterprise, renting additional farm land and purchasing more land in the next five years. In addition, roughly 58% of MFO-LFO farms indicate their business is "Sustainable with [access to] Built Equity", 25% define themselves as "Economically Viable" and only 8% define themselves as "Vulnerable". In comparison, in the 2019 CSFO survey 20% of respondents defined themselves as "Vulnerable"

Although these results indicate that MFOs and

LFOs are confident in their short- and mid-term staying power, it shows that these operations are heavily reliant on built equity to maintain farm viability when they are unable to generate annual profits. Built equity will always be challenged by the depth or duration of market disruptions and downturns. Therefore, capital access and sustained repayment capacity will continue to be an important feature of MFO and LFO viability in Vermont.

Although fifty-four percent (54%) of MFO and LFO farms have a succession plan in place, owners of these businesses still indicate that farm succession services and resources would help their farm planning. Furthermore, succession planning resources and services are cited as the program offering that would be helpful to the greatest number of MFO and LFO owners compared to other programs presented in the survey. While the presence of transfer plans is a good indicator of preparedness, the desire for more services reflects the complexity or

Percentage of MFO-LFO Farms Self-Reported as in Compliance for Five Major Features on The Farm



magnitude of the business factors that continue to need attention for medium and large farms.

Vermont's MFO and LFO farms have a significant footprint on the Vermont working landscape. Many would argue they have or had potentially the most to lose when new water quality regulations went into effect in Vermont. However, roughly five years later one sees a high level of compliance with the RAPs and an indication that this group of farms is prepared to continue farming in Vermont for years to come.

The full report "Conservation and Farm Viability on Vermont Medium and Large Farms" is available online at <https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/extfac/20/>.

Mark Cannella and the rest of the UVM Extension Agricultural Business team deliver one-to-one, small group and online learning opportunities that enhance decision-making and viability on farms. If you are interested in accessing UVM's support to improve your farm business, contact Mark at Mark.Cannella@uvm.edu or 802-476-2003.

Conservation Districts Seek Supervisors & Associate Supervisors

Vermont's 14 Natural Resources Conservation Districts (NRCs) are units of local government that were established by local landowners after the 1939 Soil Conservation Act. NRCs have served their communities for decades, guiding local conservation efforts, securing funding for local projects, and advocating for local concerns to state and national agencies. Today, NRCs are the boots on the ground for implementing state and national efforts to protect water quality and soil health and combat climate change.

Each NRC is run by a board of supervisors. Supervisors are elected each year and supported by a District Manager and volunteer associate supervisors. Supervisors live in their district, provide direction and guidance to the District Manager, and bring valuable local perspective to the natural resources conservation planning process.

Interested? Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation District: <https://www.vacd.org/conservation-districts/>

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to be able to help you identify upcoming grant opportunities. Please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/calendar> for more information.

Programs Open Year-Round Farmstead Best Management Practices (BMP) Program

Technical and financial assistance for engineered conservation practices on Vermont farms.

Jenn LaValley
Jenn.LaValley@vermont.gov
(802) 828-2431

Pasture And Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Program

Technical and financial assistance for pasture management and livestock exclusion from surface water on Vermont farms.

Mary Montour
Mary.Montour@vermont.gov
(802) 461-6087

Grassed Waterway and Filter Strip (GWFS) Program

Technical and financial assistance for implementing buffers and seeding down critical areas on VT farms.

Sonia Howlett
Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov
(802) 522-4655

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Implementation costs of vegetated buffers and rental payments for maintained buffers on Vermont agricultural land.

Ben Gabos
Ben.Gabos@Vermont.gov
(802) 461-3814

Phil Wilson
Phillip.Wilson@vermont.gov
(802) 505-5378

September

WLEI Producer Association and Service Provider grants

Producer association grants are available to organizations that represent and promote Vermont Working Lands businesses. Service Provider Grants fund direct and indirect services that support

the development of qualified businesses.

Clare Salerno
Clare.Salerno@vermont.gov
(802) 917-2637

September

Organic Certification Cost Share Program

Partial reimbursement of direct costs for organic certification

Terry Smith
Terry.Smith@vermont.gov
(802) 828-5667

September/October

Capital Equipment Assistance Program

Purchase of innovative farm equipment that aids in the reduction of runoff

Nina Gage
Nina.Gage@vermont.gov
(802) 622-4098

September/October

Working Lands Enterprise Fund Business Grants

Grants to support agriculture and forestry projects

Clare Salerno
Clare.Salerno@vermont.gov
(802) 917-2637

October

Dairy Farm Innovation Grant

Grants for dairy farmers to implement community- and climate-forward production strategies

Kathryn Donovan
Kathryn.Donovan@vermont.gov
(802) 585-4571

October

Farm to School and Early Childhood Grant

Grants to help schools and early childhood organizations develop farm to school programs or farm to early childhood programs

Trevor Lowell
Trevor.Lowell@vermont.gov
(802) 585-9186

October

Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant

Provides grants for dairy farmers, processors, and/or producer associations to take steps to improve the safety of dairy products.

Brockton Corbett
Brockton.Corbett@vermont.gov
(802) 498-5111



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A Breakfast to Remember with a Focus on the Future

By Scott Waterman,
Breakfast on the Farm
Committee Member

From coffee to cows and yogurt to youth, the return of the Breakfast on the Farm (BOTF) in-person event was a resounding success. Over 1,600 people visited the Gosliga Farm in Addison, marking the first time since 2019 that the event welcomed people back to the farm. Kids of all ages enjoyed a breakfast of Vermont-sourced foods and beverages just before touring the farm to see and learn what life there is all about.

The build-up to the event saw more people reserve tickets than ever before, emphasizing the public's excitement in getting back to on-farm events after the pandemic lockdowns of the past two years. Once again, the event spurred

understanding and increased awareness of how dairy farms work, how dairy families care for their animals and the land, and how food gets from farm to table. The vital mission of Breakfast on the Farm continues to be of great value to our farm families, workers and farming based communities.

While the 2022 event was successful, building on the accomplishments of the Vermont Breakfast on the Farm mission established in 2014, there is concern for the future. A continued rise in costs and commitment by the BOTF committee has created a challenge that must be met to continue this important work alive.

Interim Chairperson Melissa Carabeau acknowledged this significant issue for the future of Vermont BOTF. "For eight

years, the mission to support our dairy farmers and grow the public's understanding has been a passionate task. As we look to the future, that passion hasn't diminished or changed. That said, organizing BOTF year after year takes more work and time than planning a wedding! We are a small state, with an even smaller agricultural community, so finding committee members who are ready to commit countless hours to this program is challenging."

Carabeau explained that the committee hopes to continue its' efforts for many years to come but needs new committee members and leadership to help make that happen. "We are at a tipping point. Can we


continue to do the work without adding to our committee? That question hasn't been answered yet."

The 2022 BOTF event at the Gosliga Farm proved at least one thing: people love visiting our farms and experiencing Vermont's heritage of farming and land stewardship. The BOTF committee hopes to continue offering that experience with on-farm events for many years to come.

If you are interested in

serving on the committee and helping our dairy communities thrive by continuing this important work, please reach out to Interim Chairperson Melissa Carabeau (mcarabeau@poulingrain.com) with a description of your role in the dairy community, what interests or skills you would contribute to our committee, and a brief description of why you think events such as Breakfast on the Farm are important to dairy in Vermont.






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